

January 19, 2005

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

SUNSHINE PERIOD

Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554

**Docket No. WT 04-435/Cellular telephone usage on airborne aircraft comments**

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter provides public comments on the FCC's consideration of allowing the use of cellular telephones on airborne aircraft. I travel by domestic aircraft every week, and I have done so for the last six years. Most of this travel is to attend to personal business. On occasion I travel on business in my role as a health, safety and transportation attorney. In summary, the **FCC should prohibit all use (i.e., for free or for a fee) of cellular telephones on airborne aircraft** for a variety of reasons, including the occupational safety and health of the airplane's crew, the health and welfare of the passengers as a whole, and as a continued deterrent to terrorism that could be caused by or involve the use of cellular telephones during flight.

On more than one occasion I have witnessed the passenger use of cellular telephones on non-airborne aircrafts result in fights (physical and verbal) between passengers when the cellular telephone users use profanity, talk loudly (it is difficult to not talk loudly because of the background din of the airplane's cabin), do not limit the conversation to a minute or two (i.e., hi, the plane is leaving now or is leaving late), etc. These situations expose the flight crew and passengers to possible injury and emotional distress. These "disagreements" have occurred when the telephone use is for a limited time while the airplane is loading or when it is sitting on the runway for an extended period because of weather delays. I can only imagine how violent these incidents could have become during a long flight if the use of cellular telephones in airborne aircraft is allowed. There is no need to expose the flight crew or passengers to this (workplace) violence.

Continuing technology advances and devious minds, like the minds of terrorists, could easily use a cellular telephone, which is a portable electronic device, to develop new ways to remotely detonate bombs/explosives/missiles that are located on the airplane or on the ground, or to implant other devices such as lasers or stun devices in the telephone to interrupt the flight. As evidenced by my frequent air travel, I am not an alarmist or a person who becomes overly concerned about these possibilities, they are possible, and in my opinion it is prudent to not introduce more opportunities for such activities. Currently it would be an "abnormal" act to activate your cellular telephone while the airplane is airborne, so the crew and passengers would take notice of such an attempted use. This potential "notification" that something is wrong will be lost if it is acceptable for everyone to use a cellular telephone during airborne flight.

Another safety and health hazard for the crew and passengers is the high noise created if multiple people are talking on telephones while the airplane is airborne. The cabin of an

No. of Copies rec'd \_\_\_\_\_  
List ABOVE \_\_\_\_\_

airborne airplane is already noisy, and that noise will significantly increase to a much higher level when multiple cellular telephones are ringing and passengers are talking on their telephones. I am aware of regular air travelers who have been diagnosed with hearing loss due to the high noise in airborne aircraft. Hearing protectors that drown out all the noise is not a practical solution due to the need to be able to hear the announcements of the flight crew during flight (I assume that is why flight crews are not allowed to wear hearing protection during flights).

On most of the flights I take I find that for the first time in their day people are forced to "turn off" and take a breath and relax. It is a nice opportunity to get to know someone new, interact with your traveling companion, or read a good book. In this day of rush-rush, hurry-hurry, it is encouraging to see people have to unwind for the length of an airplane flight. Allowing the use of cellular telephones in airborne aircraft will take away this opportunity to relax for all of the passengers, and will therefore have negative impact on the public's health.

Finally, on a recent television report I heard the Chairman of the FCC state that allowing the use of cellular telephones on airborne aircraft is a good thing because people could keep in contact with their family while traveling. He used the example of him having to travel while leaving a sick child at home. Using the cellular telephone on the airborne aircraft would let him keep in touch. It sounds to me more like a bureaucrat who would like to promote cellular telephone providers' wares and services so he might someday land a plush position after leaving "public service." It seems to me if he has a sick child at home and he were a good father, he would change his travel plans to stay in town to be near his son, and if that was not possible, he could work a quick call in to his sick child while he is still on the ground – surely his child and the public's health and safety merit cutting a business meeting short five minutes early so he can call from a land line.

Thank you for considering my comments on the proposal and my experiences from being such a seasoned airline traveler.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A frequent flyer".

A frequent flyer who prefers to keep their name private